WHITE SAILS

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STOP — KISSING — YOUR GREAT-GRANDMOTHER!" *Page* 18.

WHITE SAILS

BY

EMMA HUNTINGTON NASON

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WHITE SAILS

TO THE CHILDREN
OF THE "CLASS OF SIXTY-FIVE"
THESE VERSES
ARE LOVINGLY DEDICATED.

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WHITE SAILS.

PRELUDE.

At dawn, they sailed. A dancing, white-winged fleet,
With freight of children's souls, sped to the sea.
The waves, in-coming, dipped and smiled to meet
Glad, childish faces flushed with hope and glee;
And soft winds blew, their untried sails to greet,
While sea and air quivered with melody.

No swift "God speed!" the happy voyagers lack;
From them, a song sweeps shoreward on the breeze;
And we, whose eyes but yesterday turned back,
Follow the wake of white-sailed argosies.
Nor cloud, nor storm, can dim the shining track
Across the harbor, left by ships like these.

OFF FOR BOY-LAND.

HO! All aboard! A traveler
Sets sail from Baby-land!
Before my eyes there comes a blur,
But still I kiss my hand,
And try to smile as off he goes,
My bonny, winsome boy!
Yes, *bon voyage!* God only knows
How much I wish thee joy.

Oh! tell me, have ye heard of him?
He wore a sailor's hat
All silver-corded round the brim,
And — stranger e'en than that —
A wondrous suit of navy-blue,
With pockets deep and wide;
Oh! tell me, sailors, tell me true,
How fares he on the tide?

We've now no baby in the house;
'Twas but this very morn
He doffed his dainty 'broidered blouse,
With skirts of snowy lawn,
And shook a mass of silken curls
From off his sunny brow;
They fretted him — "so like a girl's;
Mamma can have them now."

He owned a bran-new pocket book,
But that he could not find;
A knife and string was all he took;
What did he leave behind?
A heap of blocks with letters gay,
And here and there a toy;
I cannot pick them up to-day,
My heart is with my boy.

Ho! ship ahoy! At Boyhood's town
Cast anchor strong and deep.
What! Tears upon this little gown
Left for mamma to keep?
Weep not, but smile; for through the air
A merry message rings; —
"Just sell it to the rag-man there!
I've done with baby things!"

MY ANCESTORS.

A RUSTLE of stiffly wrought brocade,
A satin petticoat's shimmer,
A gleam of buckles with pearl inlaid,
Where two dainty slippers glimmer!
A wealth of lustrous, powdered hair
Heaped up like the white sea-foam,
And a golden curl escaping where
She loosened the lofty comb!

Be still, my heart! Has yon fair dame,
Adown from the panels oaken,
Stepped silently out of her dingy frame
At some mysterious token?
Ah, surely hers was the yellow lace,
And hers was the figured dress;
But the face is strangely like the face
Of our winsome little Bess.

Before the mirror she stands in the sheen
Of her scanty silken gathers,
And flutters her fan of gold and green
With its fringe of peacock feathers ;
When, suddenly, down the attic stairs,
With a martial clang and tread,
And the air of one who danger dares
Or dies with the valiant dead,

There cometh a knight with battered shield,
And a leathern doublet musty,
And worn by use in trench and field,
And a broadsword old and rusty.
But the hero stops with a measured pause ;
Then doffing his casque in haste,
Slips the arm that fought in the Indian wars
Round the slender, pointed waist.

And my lady's eyes flash quick and proud
As she turns to her gallant brother ;
" Such liberties, sir, are not allowed !
Stop — kissing — your great-grandmother ! "
But he, undaunted, serenely smiles,
And says with a dash of scorn,
" I ? I came over with Captain Miles,
And died before you were born."

O beauty and pride a century old,
  Your story has never an ending!
O valorous deeds of our fathers told,
  Through age upon age descending,
Ye come to me over again to-day
  In the spirit the children show,
As they play their parts in the old-time way
  With the trappings of long ago.

THE BRAVEST BOY IN TOWN.

HE lived in the Cumberland Valley,
And his name was Jamie Brown ;
But it changed one day, so the neighbors say,
To the " Bravest Boy in Town."

'Twas the time when the Southern soldiers,
Under Early's mad command,
O'er the border made their dashing raid
From the north of Maryland.

And Chambersburg unransomed
In smouldering ruins slept,
While up the vale, like a fiery gale,
The Rebel raiders swept.

And a squad of gray-clad horsemen
Came thundering o'er the bridge,
Where peaceful cows in the meadows browse,
At the feet of the great Blue Ridge.

And on till they reached the village,
That fair in the valley lay,
Defenseless then, for its loyal men
At the front were far away.

"Pillage and spoil and plunder!"
This was the fearful word
That the Widow Brown, in gazing down
From her latticed window, heard.

'Neath the boughs of the sheltering oak-tree,
The leader bared his head
As left and right, until out of sight,
His dusty gray-coats sped.

Then he called: "Halloo! within there!"
A gentle, fair-haired dame
Across the floor to the open door
In gracious answer came.

"Here! stable my horse, you woman!" —
The soldier's tones were rude —
"Then bestir yourself, and from yonder shelf
Set out your store of food."

For her guest she spread the table;
She motioned him to his place
With a gesture proud; then the widow bowed
And gently — asked a grace.

"If thine enemy hunger, feed him!
I obey, dear Christ!" she said;
A creeping blush with its scarlet flush
O'er the face of the soldier spread.

He rose: "You have said it, Madam!
Standing within your doors
Is the Rebel foe; but as forth they go
They shall trouble not you nor yours."

Alas, for the word of the leader!
Alas, for the soldier's vow!
When the captain's men rode down the glen,
They carried the widow's cow.

It was then the fearless Jamie
Sprang up with flashing eyes,
And in spite of tears and his mother's fears,
On the gray mare off he flies.

Like a wild young Tam O'Shanter,
He plunged with piercing whoop,
O'er field and brook till he overtook
The straggling Rebel troop

Laden with spoil and plunder,
And laughing and shouting still,
As with cattle and sheep they lazily creep
Through the dust o'er the winding hill.

"Oh! the coward crowd," cried Jamie;
"There's Brindle! I'll teach them now!"
And with headlong stride, at the captain's side,
He called for his mother's cow.

"Who are you, and who is your mother?—
I promised she should not miss?—
Well! upon my word have I never heard
Of assurance like to this!"

"Is your word the word of a soldier?"—
And the young lad faced his foes,
As a jeering laugh, in anger half
And half in sport, arose.

But the captain drew his saber,
And spoke, with lowering brow:
"Fall back into line! The joke is mine!
Surrender the widow's cow!"

And a capital joke they thought it,
That a barefoot lad of ten
Should demand his due — and get it, too —
In the face of forty men.

And the rollicking Rebel raiders
Forgot themselves somehow,
And three cheers brave for the hero gave,
And three for the brindle cow.

He lived in the Cumberland Valley,
And his name was Jamie Brown;
But it changed, one day, so the neighbors say,
To the "Bravest Boy in Town."

THE BISHOP'S VISIT.

TELL you about it? Of course I will!
I thought 'twould be dreadful to have him come,
For mamma said *I* must be quiet and still,
And she put away my whistle and drum —

And made me unharness the parlor chairs,
And packed my cannon and all the rest
Of my noisiest playthings off up-stairs,
On account of this very distinguished guest.

Then every room was turned upside down,
And all the carpets hung out to blow;
For when the Bishop is coming to town
The house must be in order, you know.

So out in the kitchen I made my lair,
And started a game of hide-and-seek;
But Bridget refused to have me there,
For the Bishop was coming — to stay a week —

And she must make cookies and cake and pies,
And fill every closet and platter and pan,
Till I thought this Bishop, so great and wise,
Must be an awfully hungry man.

Well! at last he came; and I do declare,
Dear grandpapa, he looked just like you,
With his gentle voice, and his silvery hair,
And eyes with a smile a-shining through.

And whenever he read or talked or prayed,
I understood every single word;
And I wasn't the leastest bit afraid,
Though I never once spoke or stirred;

Till, all of a sudden, he laughed right out
To see me sit quietly listening so;
And began to tell us stories about
Some queer little fellows in Mexico.

And all about Egypt and Spain — and then
He *wasn't* disturbed by a little noise,
But said that the greatest and best of men
Once were rollicking, healthy boys.

THE BISHOP TELLS STORIES.

And he thinks it is no matter at all
If a little boy runs and jumps and climbs ;
And mamma should be willing to let me crawl
Through the banister-rails in the hall sometimes.

And Bridget, sir, made a great mistake
In stirring up such a bother, you see,
For the Bishop — he didn't care for cake,
And really liked to play games with me.

But though he's so honored in word and act —
(Stoop down, for this is a secret now) —
He couldn't spell Boston ! That's a fact !
But whispered to me to tell him how.

A CANDLEMAS STORY.

SIT closer, my lad, to thy mother's knee ;
'Tis Candlemas-night and the winds blow cold ;
The storm-king sweeps from the northern sea,
And the snows fall deep and silently
Over the waste and wold.

Heap up the coals in the glowing grate ;
Like fire-lit jewels they flash and shine ;
'Tis a night when tales for the telling wait,
And the hours grow neither long nor late,
As thy young eyes drink from mine.

And so I will tell you a Candlemas tale,
Born of those marvelous days of yore,
When every breath of the northern gale
Wafted the terrible Northman's sail
Down to the English shore.

And King Canute had come to reign
O'er English lands through the conqueror's might;
But had sworn, by the oath of the awful Dane,
Justly to rule o'er jarl and thane
And Saxon churl and wight.

And he banished the heathen gods, 'tis said,
From every shrine where their rites were told;
And worshiped the one true God instead,
Placing his crown on the hallowed head
Of our Lord in the minster old. *

And many a year, at Candlemas time,
He went to carry the priest's good cheer;
Pleased in his heart with the Saxon chime,
"As merrily sang" — so goes the rhyme —
"The monks when the king rowed near."

The monks of Ely, who yearly kept
The Candlemas feast in the olden way;
But once, it chanced that the Ice-king swept
Ahead of the great Canute, and crept
Where the fens of the Abbey lay.

* Henry of Huntingdon in recording the familiar incident of King Canute and the sea, in which the waves refused to obey the royal mandate, also states that "from that day would not King Canute wear his crown, but he put it on the head of the image of our Lord in the old Minster at Winchester."

With his chilling breath the shore he rims;
At his touch, the vast fen-waters froze;
And the Ice-king laughs as on he skims
Where the monks of Ely sing their hymns,
In the Abbey's sheltered close.

O'er the frozen lake no boat can pass;
And the great King chafes — for who shall dare
To trust his foot to the treacherous mass —
As blue as steel but as frail as glass —
To join with the monks in prayer?

Up leaped the brave churl Brihtmaer then!
A giant he stood among the Danes; —
"What ho! are ye sons of Norseland men,
Yet faint on the verge of a frozen fen,
O valiant earls and thanes!

"Behold! if the ice bear Brihtmaer's weight,"
And the strong man sprang to the glittering plain,
"Then surely the King Canute the Great,
With never a fear may dare his fate —
He and his knightly train!"

And across the lake in his sinewy speed,
He strode, while the Northmen gazed in scorn;

But the King, who was great in name and deed,
Though small in stature, gave good heed
To the words of the wight low-born.

From their place, at the water's ice-rimmed edge,
He motioned his lords with a haughty frown ;
And the great Canute in his royal sledge
Was safely drawn o'er marsh and sedge,
To the old cathedral town.

Then the shouts that rose were long and loud,
And only hushed by the clash of spears,
As the brave churl Brihtmaer lowly bowed
At the feet of the King — his triumph proud
Forgotten amidst his fears.

But the great King cried : — "Stout heart, thy name !
Thou and thy children's sons for aye
The Saxon freeman's rights shall claim,
With wealth and honors and loyal fame
For that thou hast done this day."

And to-night, as the Candlemas winds blow cold,
We fancy we hear the old monks sing ;
Whilst we read again from the legends old,
How the brave King loved his vassal bold,
And how Brihtmaer loved his King.

THE CONCEITED DANDELION.

ALOFT upon his graceful stem,
The dandelion swung;
Oh! brave was he and fair to see
The garden flowers among.

The violet trembled at his feet;
The valley-lilies hushed
The tinkle of their tiny bells;
The clover fairly blushed.

He noticed not these simple folk,
But stood erect and high,
And cried, "On all the great, green earth
There's none so fine as I!

"The buttercup's an upstart bold!
King's cup — the saucy elf!
I've heard Sir Graybeard tell of stars —
I am a star myself!"

And so throughout the sweet spring day,
He of the golden crown
Nodded and shone and thought himself
The glory of the town.

But when the starlit midnight came,
Sir Graybeard roughly shook
His youthful friend and cried, "Wake up!
Wake up and take a look!"

Full long the dandelion gazed
At God's own stars — and then
Shrank close within his hood of green
And never smiled again.

His head grew bald; his locks of white
Flew on the winds afar;
He sobbed, "I've lived just long enough
To find I'm not a star."

A BARGAIN.

NOW who is this that cometh to call?
A traveling merchant? Ah! of all
The curious ways — and ways are many
In which to turn an honest penny —
This is the queerest that e'er befell:
"Old iron and lead and brass to sell!"

And standing here in the morning light,
All tattered and grimy — a sorrier sight
Than his mother ever has seen before,
Is the merchant-man at the parlor door.
His hands are black; and a sooty face
To his bearing adds a doubtful grace;
But his voice is eager, his brown eyes dance,
He spreads his wares with a merry glance,
And his cry, as true as I live to tell,
Is this — "Old iron and brass to sell!"

Here are ancient kettles, and prisms of glass
From a broken lamp, and its stand of brass;

A LITTLE TRADING MERCHANT.

A section of pipe and a poker too
Which, mended, might be as good as new ;
Here are horseshoes rusty ; and bronzes queer —
The fragments of some old chandelier.
Here are rings for a curtain and broken rods, —
Familiar they seem as household gods !
And the headless nails and screws that clink
With bolts and hinges — they make me think
Of something — I've, somewhere, read or heard —
" A story ? " And at the magic word,
Down sits the merchant upon the spot,
His motley wares and his trade forgot.

But I only had it in mind to say
That once on a time, one far-off day,
A people, freed from some dreadful fate,
Built to their god a statue great.
An island people they were, and so
Where the blue sea-waters come and go,
They raised their mighty Colossus high,
A god of brass, 'neath the azure sky.

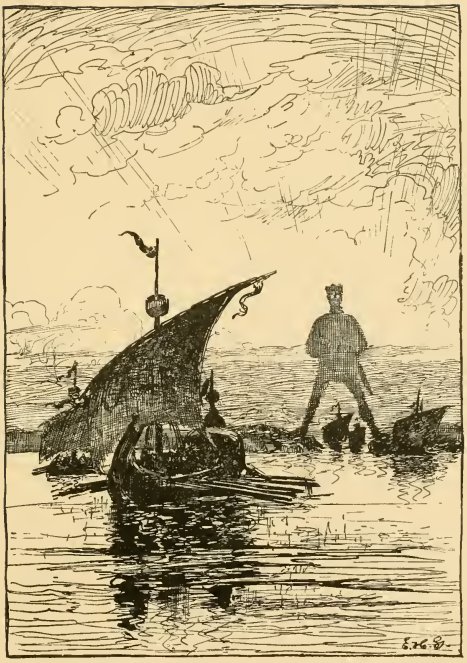
All the wealth of Rhodes, her skill, her power,
Were lavished this sculptured form to dower ;
Its eyes were of fire and lit the seas
For a hundred of lesser divinities ;

But the earth-born slave who fed the flame,
From within, up a winding stairway came.

For half a century, aye! and more,
The statue stood on the famous shore;
Then the story tells how an earthquake shock
Dashed the god of brass from its base of rock.
It fell, this wonder of ancient art!—
You think, 'twas because of its hollow heart?

By the harbor blue the fragments lay,
While the slow-timed centuries rolled away;
Till one bright morning a keen-eyed Jew,
A traveling pedler — ah, yes, like you!—
In search of a bargain chanced to pass,
And bought the whole for old iron and brass.

A Saracen Caliph the treasure sold,
Who laughed as he jingled the pedler's gold.
Alas! the mighty are fallen, indeed,
When gods are bartered for gain and greed;
When the world's Seventh Wonder bound in a pack
To oblivion rides on a donkey's back!
It made a great many most cumbersome loads—
This fallen Colossus of ancient Rhodes.



"A GOD OF BRASS, 'NEATH THE AZURE SKY."

No, "all the king's oxen and all the king's men"
Couldn't put the great statue together again.
And whither the pieces went, doth not appear —
You are sure you have none in your basket here?
I would pay the last penny I have to command,
For a bit of the statue from Chares's hand.

You've nothing to sell? You'll give me the whole?
O pedler of pedlers, with generous soul!
I've told you a story? You think it but fair
To leave the collection and call it square?
Well, a bargain's a bargain! and mildew and rust,
And odds and ends, broken to fragments and dust,
Are a currency fitting, most truly, to pass
In exchange for a tale of old iron and brass.

WEIGHING THE PRINCES.

RING, all ye bells, from London-town
To Windsor's sward of green!
The brother of King Henry wins
The sister of the Queen!

"Harp, all ye harpers, through the hall!
Ye merry minstrels, sing!
To-day, the Queen's own sister weds
The brother of the King!

"So doubly royal be the rout!
And gaily through the land,
From west to east proclaim the feast!"
This was the King's command.

"To Cornwall's lord, far-off Provence
Hath sent her fairest maid;
So dance we all in Windsor's hall
And down the forest glade!"

"Bring rushes clean! bring trailing vines!"
This was the Queen's sweet will;
"Bestrew the floors, bedeck the doors,
The earthen pitchers fill!

"And where the lords and ladies dance,
To dulcimer and drum,
Early or late, throw wide each gate,
And bid the children come!"

Two royal English boys looked on,
And watched the pageant bright;
Their merry eyes, at each surprise,
Danced with a new delight.

They saw the wild boar and the deer
In Windsor's forests fall;
The flocks and kine, great beeves and swine
Slain at the castle wall.

Great trees were felled and fires were built
With boughs of crackling thorn;
Each water-trough, from streams far-off,
Stood flowing night and morn.

Huge iron kettles boiling hung ;
Deep ovens baked beside ;
While great roasts burn, or cool in turn,
Upon the hearthstone wide.

The solemn cooks passed to and fro
Majestic in their place ;
The kitchen lass, in plates of brass,
Smiled at her own sweet face.

Hither and yon the servants sped,
Each bustling maid and man !
With fun and feud, they baked and brewed,
And polished pot and pan.

They heaped the wooden trenchers high ;
The leathern jugs o'erflow ;
The bride's own cup, they fillèd up
With white wine from Bordeaux.

And thus they spread the royal board,
With lavish hands, they say ;
And thirty thousand dishes graced
The wedding feast, that day.

" Now open all the castle gates ! "
King Henry gaily cried,

"For there be more at every door
To wait to greet the bride!"

And maddest was the merry rout,
And noisiest the din,
When midst the sport, to Windsor's court,
They brought the children in.

All from the streets of Windsor-town,
From King's highway and lane,
From crowded lot or lonely cot,
They called the motley train.

The steward scowled, the scullions stared
To hear the King's behest;
But royalty served graciously
Each hungry beggar guest.

"Now, bring the scales!" King Henry said;
"Come here, my sons!" quoth he;
"Against your weight, I stake the fate —
Whatever it may be —

"Of silver shillings, pence or pounds!"
The jingling pieces fell;
Each royal boy brimful of joy
Weighed down the balance well;

Till, ounce on ounce, and pound on pound,
The coin as weighty grew ;
How many pence were taken thence,
The courtiers never knew ;

For two lads flung them right and left,
And every needy guest,
Each boy and girl, good wife and churl,
In blue or russet drest,

Found, for a largess, silver bits
Upon the regal earth ;
With King's own face and sign of grace
On every penny's worth.

And when these royal lads were men,
And one was England's king,
How they were weighed in castle-glade,
The minstrels loved to sing.

And when the wedding bells rang out
For Edward and his queen,
Those gifts of old a hundredfold
Came back to Windsor green.

THE LETTERS THAT WENT TO FRANCE.

FIVE handsome Yankee lads one day
Set sail for sunny France;
Fair foreign cousins each had they,
And fortunes too, perchance,
Beneath that far-off azure sky,
Across the waters blue;—
Their names were A and E and I,
And O and youthful U.

Dame Alphabet stood on the strand,
To bid her sons farewell;
"Remember 'tis a lettered land,"
She said; "and proudly tell
All kith and kin where'er they be
Across the flashing foam,
That our illustrious ancestry
Dates back to ancient Rome."

And thus it chanced in blithesome mood,
And feeling quite at home,
Our five young friends in Paris stood,
Within the Place Vendome;

"DATES BACK TO ANCIENT ROME."

When all at once the agile A
Espied another elf,
So like to him in every way
It might have been himself;

And darting like a ray of light,
He ran with breathless haste,
And clasped that fair Parisian sprite
Around its airy waist.
"Dear Cousin A, accept," he said,
"This greeting from mamma!"
"A?" and the other tossed its head —
"Good sir, my name is Ah!"

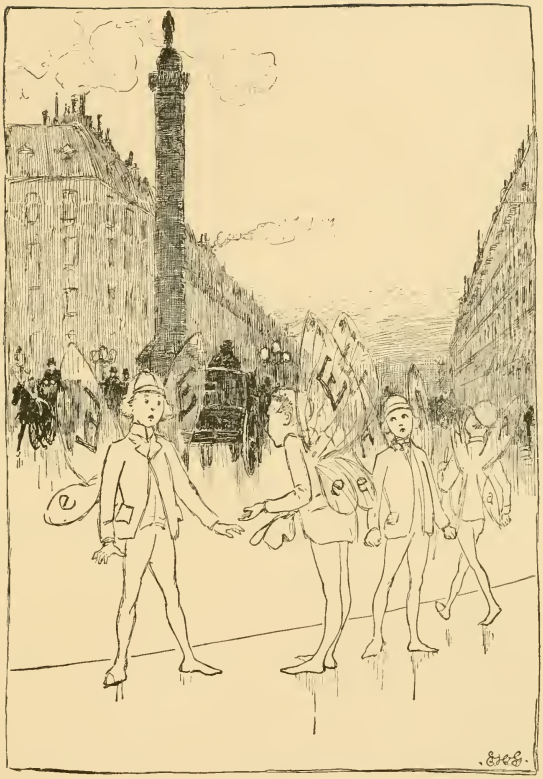
Poor A amazed and angry too,
Fell back in sudden shame;
What would his august mother do,
That proud New England dame!
He turned to E; in time to hear
Another Frenchman say,
"Excuse me, friend, 'tis very queer,
But still my name is A!"

"E! I insist!" cried eager E;
"Why thus pervert the truth?"
And in this dire perplexity,
A tall and slender youth,
Straight as an arrow speeding by,
Stopped short the sport to see;
When on his neck fell watchful I,
And lo! his name was E.

Just then, unnoticed until now,
U, sauntering up the street.
Saluted with a graceful bow
His counterpart complete.
"Pardon! but may I ask your name?
I pray thee tell it true!"
With twist and quirk the answer came;
It really was not U!

They call for O in hot surprise;
They seek him far and near;
When unto their bewildered eyes,
Two circling forms appear,
Each crying as they onward run,
"I cannot let you go!
I am — you are — a long lost son!
O, O — O, O — O, Oh!"

But great A, calling all his clan,
Declared with awful frown,
He'd take them, every mother's man,
Straight home to Boston Town!
O should not stay, nor I nor E,
And certainly not U!
So straight they sailed as straight could be,
Once more across the blue.



"BUT STILL MY NAME IS A!"

And what said good Dame Alphabet?
  Indeed, what could she say,
But bid her children not forget
  The lesson learned that day.
Yet she for one was glad to know
  Where this strange race is found,
That O, at least, is honest O,
  Old-fashioned, full and round.

PIERRO.

PIERRO is a bird with a yellow breast,
And plumage soft as the whitest down ;
And all through the day, with a strange unrest,
He swings in his cage of rustic brown ;
Swings to and fro on his willow ring,
And chirps a little, but will not sing.

Our pet canary — sweet-voiced Pierro !
We coax him in vain through the sunny day,
With all the songs that the home-birds know ;
But he, in a tender, sorrowful way,
Pecks at the dainties we fondly bring,
And chirps a little, yet will not sing.

But when at evening the gas-light shines,
And the fire-flames laugh in the glowing grate,
When shadows frolic among the vines,
There comes to Pierro an ideal mate —
A shadow-bird upon dusky wing !
'Tis then we learn that Pierro can sing.

With a witching melody, sweet and low,
In wistful fondness, he seems to say,
"Do you know me, beloved? 'Tis I, Pierro!"
And the shadow-bird nods, in Pierro's own way.
Then the ravishing carols exultant fall
For the stranger-guest on the silent wall.

Ah, happy singer, we cannot chide;
Poesy's crown unto thee belongs!
There are many who sing, in the gay noon-tide,
To an eager crowd; but I deem that songs,
Sweeter than ever the world has heard,
Are sung, in some hearts, to a shadow-bird.

A SMALL BOY'S QUESTIONS.

MAMMA, sit down! I want to ask
You just one thing or two:
What makes my shadow stretch out so?
And tell me, what is dew?

Is it the trees that make the wind
By switching round their boughs?
And where do dogs go when they die,
And kitty-cats and cows?

And when it thunders in the sky
What makes the clouds all wink?
Could I dig down to China-land
In ten years, do you think?

Why don't the people tumble off
When China turns this way?
And when you say the moon is full,
What is it full of, pray?

How far is it up to the clouds ?
How long are comets' tails ?
And why will not umbrellas do
For boats as well as sails ?

How did the very firstest man,
Who made tape-measures, know
How long to make the first end inch ?
And say, do yard-sticks grow ?

How many workmen did it take
To build a pyramid ?
And won't you show me on the map
Where Baby Moses hid ?

What makes the little darkies black ?
What makes the sky so blue ?
And is it right to tell a joke
When not one word is true ?

Why do you love me just the same
When I am cross and bad ?
And tell me, mamma, why am I
The only boy you had ?

And will you be the grandmother
To all my little boys?
And when you come to see us bring
Your pockets full of toys?

Is Santa Claus a truly man?
Have reindeer hoofs or paws?
Who dresses all the Christmas dolls —
Does Mrs. Santa Claus?

Is Jesus real, mamma dear?
Were frankincense and myrrh
His Christmas gifts? Did Mary think
Those things were meant for her —

Or did she keep them safe for him?
Why don't the Bible tell?
Was God ever a little boy —
He knows our hearts so well?

What makes volcanoes smoke and blaze?
Who built their fires then,
If all the earth was finished off
Before God made the men?

Where is our fire when it goes out ?
  Why can't I understand ?
Well, won't you tell me where to find
  Some undiscovered land ?

If God could make this whole great earth
  With only six days' stir,
Why need we be so awful long
  In fixing Jupiter —

And putting air and water there,
  And grass and trees and flowers,
To make it comfortable for folks
  Just like this world of ours ?

How can God hollow out the hills
  Without a single tool ?
You don't know everything ? Well, then,
  Why don't you go to school ?

PRINCE POTEMKIN THE MAGICIAN.

(*A Russian Wonder-Story.*)

IN the witching days of the long ago,
In that wondrous realm, whose fields of snow
Southward stretch to a sunnier land
Of sea-washed shores and desert strand,
And west and east o'er the mountains — well,
Farther and wider than one can tell —
There stood on the banks of a river blue,
The city of Kherson, grand and new.

Here, on the steps of a palace fine,
Gazing out where the water's line
Through the stately harbor spreading free,
Meets the surge of the shining sea,
A slender lad with sorrowful eyes
Crouched in the light of the western skies.

Over his shoulders loosely hung
A scarlet cloak whose tatters swung

In the breeze; while hidden its folds within,
And tenderly clasped, was a violin.

But the lad sprang up with a guilty start
Which checked the blood in his boyish heart,
As footsteps rang on the marble floor,
And a sharp voice called through the open door:
"Ho! Zaleski! What, yawning still,
In the sunshine here on the window-sill?
I'll wager my daggers are thick with rust,
Boots and saddle inch-deep with dust,
Horses unfed or fed but half" —
Here the master uttered a mocking laugh,
As he added, "Get out of this nook, you elf!
I'll lounge awhile in the sun myself!"
Zaleski hastily stepped aside,
His eyes in amazement open wide;
While his master, handsome and gay and proud,
Mused, half to himself and half aloud,
As people in stories are wont to do:
"Poor dolt! I even could pity you,
Waif of the streets whom a dog would spurn!
But are we not each of us slaves in turn?
I'm Bauer, Potemkin's courier; he
The princely pet of Her Majesty,
The Empress Catharine. Him, we're told,
She feeds with gems from a spoon of gold,

While he at the tip of his mighty sword,
Hands back the lands of some conquered lord.
Anon, his mightiness nods and glances:
I peril my neck to feed his fancies.
For days and days, like an insane man,
O'er the deserts I ride to Astrakhan.
For what? A melon! Important, very!
Or else my lord doth choose a cherry,
And away to Cerasus, early or late,
I speed to fill Potemkin's plate.
To-day, perchance, I am ordered off
To the royal gates at Peterhof;
To-morrow all the realms of a Czar
Too poor and mean and barbarous are
To furnish aught to the Prince's taste,
And lo! to Paris or Rome I haste
For some new trinket to please his soul!
— Come hither! O abject son of a Pole,
Reared at the end of a Russian knout!
What were you dreaming just now about?"
The Polish page turned sick with fright;
His dark eyes glistened, his lips were white;
His fingers trembled, his knees grew weak;
He must obey; yet he dared not speak.
"I was — was — wishing" — at last he said;
"I was wishing — first — that I were dead!

Then I dreamed" — here his head began to spin —
"That the great Czarina Catharine,
Somewhere, somehow, some happy day,
Had smiled to hear Zaleski play."

"Play what? A violin! ha! that's rich!
'Signior Zaleski Alexeyevitch,
Musician at court!' Well, I advise
That you ask the wizard, the wondrous-wise
Enchanter Potemkin; he alone
Can give you a hearing next the throne.
'Is he a wizard?' Look ye around!
Here's Kherson the Splendid, sprung from the ground,
Wharves and houses and square and street,
Just at the stamp of his mighty feet.
He winks; the tree-top turns to a steeple,
And baldheaded mushrooms change to people,
Fierce wolves and bears into stupid sheep,
Desert lands into gardens deep —
Oh! he is the master of mysteries dim!
'Musician at court!' Ha, ha! Ask him!"

And just at that moment the bustle and hum
Of the court-yard ceased; and who should come

Through the open square, but the mighty Prince,
Greater than any before or since
In the Empress' realms; and in sudden fear
The courier muttered: "Soft! I'm not here!
I'm off to Warsaw — to Novgorod!"
While poor Zaleski fell on the sod
And gasped to the Prince: "Oh! art thou, then,
The wisest of all the wizard-men,
Who winks a tree-top into a steeple,
And baldheaded mushrooms into people?"

The guards would have crushed him where they
stood,
But Potemkin, stirred by a gracious mood,
Cried: "Let him alone! Get up, I say!
Who told you I was a wizard, pray?"
"My master, Bauer; he said that you
All the secrets of magic knew.
That you were his master; and you alone
Could give me a hearing next the throne —
Me — poor Zaleski — a place to play
At the Empress' feet, some happy day."

"Where is your master — the reckless youth!"
The Prince replied. "He has told the truth

AND ZALESKI PLAYED AND POTEMKIN LISTENED.

For once, be it said, if never again.
I can turn mushrooms, or toads, to men;
Build towns and villages, many a one,
Out of nothing but sand and sun,
Shaming the conjurer's arts to shade;
But boy-musicians are born, not made!
Still music we need! Let me hear you play
As though for your life, this very day!"

And Zaleski played. His violin
From his babyhood, his friend had been.
Of written music he knew no note,
But the trills that die in the song-bird's throat;
The voice of the winds and the waves astir,
The breath of the morn, his masters were;
While floating dreamily through his veins
Were all those weird entrancing strains
That never were written, yet have a place
In the deathless melodies of his race.

And Potemkin, listening, quite forgot
Himself and his suite, the time, the spot,
Till, roused by the murmur of voices gruff,
He raised a finger and cried, "Enough!
The daylight wanes and the hour grows late;
Put the boy in trim for the Empress' fête!"

Then to the lad, as with sudden thought :
"Tell your master, Bauer, from me, he ought
To save his wisdom for baldhead sages ;
Henceforth he can have mushrooms for pages ! "

Oh ! then began the marvelous days,
When the streets of Kherson were all ablaze
With the swiftly-spreading and wild report,
That the regal Head of the Russian court —
With double-eagle and golden ball,
Crown and sceptre and throne and all —
Who had traveled far and had traveled wide,
Was coming to visit " Potemkin's Pride " —
The province the Prince had sworn should be
" Catharine's Glory," beside the sea.

In Kherson city was bustle and din,
As men marched out and men marched in ;
Hither and yon were messengers sent
For banners and ships and armament.
Lofty dwellings with dome and tower
Rose, as it were, in a single hour ;
Shining palace and square and mart,
Built and peopled with wondrous art ;
Crowded market and gay bazaar
Furnished with luxuries from afar ;

Costly wares from west and east,
Fruit and grain for a nation's feast;
Ores that darken and gems that shine,
Hemp and honey and wax and wine,
Brought with speedy and lavish hands,
At the Prince's word, from a hundred lands.
And the boy Zaleski — where was he?
At the feet of her gracious majesty;
The past forgotten, the future fair,
With music and mirth and never a care
He sailed from Krementshuk down the stream
To Kherson's gates, in a golden dream;
For the Russian Queen, each happy day,
Had smiled to hear Zaleski play.

And still on the lad's bewildered view
The wonder of wonders grew and grew.
On distant plains where, the sages say,
The sands of countless centuries lay,
Turrets and towers arose mid air,
Telling of city and castle fair;
Where the river-beds of old were dry
Through far canals the ships sailed by;
Gardens were blooming and fountains ran
In the track of the eastern caravan;

Where once the merciless Cossack rode
Were herds of cattle and man's abode ;
Camp-fires illumined the plains afar,
Each mountain blazed with a burning star ;
The sheep had driven the wolves to flight ;
There was song by day and dance by night ;
While children flocked to the river's side
To watch the Empress' galley glide,
With scarlet awning and gilded oar,
Down to the Black Sea's mystic shore ;
And never was grander triumph seen,
In days of Cæsar, or ancient queen,
Than the Wonder-Prince, with his magic art,
Conjured out of the desert's heart,
When Catharine journeyed into the south,
Through Kherson's gates, to the Dnieper's mouth.

. . . . . .

"*But how did he do it?*" — Sir Truthful Eyes —
"*Was he a wizard all wonder-wise?*"
Ah ! in wonder-stories, I thought that now
We never asked for the why and how.
"*But I said it was true?*" Then I must own
What the great Czarina upon her throne
Seems never once to have guessed or known —
That the distant cities with turrets tall,
Were a hollow sham and an empty wall ;

That each ship in the yellow sand stood fast,
A part of the same illusion vast;
That gardens bloomed on the barren plains
Only with infinite toil and pains;
That the peaceful homes beside the way
All disappeared in a single day;
And the stars that lighted the shining track
Died out when the Empress turned her back;
The happy peasants and children bright
Who danced by day, moved on by night
With the patient sheep and the cattle slow,
Like a modern, mammoth traveling-show;
And millions of silver rubles white
Were spent on this vision of brief delight
By the Prince — great Catharine's praise to win.
And the marvel is that it could have been.

THE LADS OF LONDONDERRY.

AY! this is the river of Irish song,
And this the line of the ancient ferry
Where King James' host, twelve thousand strong,
Marched down to capture Londonderry.

On the hill the great cathedral stood,
As it stands to-day in the glinting sun,
And the city's walls were staunch and good
Whose bastions gleamed with pike and gun.

Wild hordes, with bristling front and flank,
Of old had stormed the town in vain;
But the soul of every soldier sank
When the foemen marched from Coleraine.

For here in the heart of the Irish land
The English cause had staked its life;
There was siege and slaughter on every hand:
The air with awful tales was rife.

And the troops of William rallying late,
Tardily sailed, relief to bear;
While Londonderry could only wait,
With a feeble hope almost despair.

"Ah! woe betides us!" the women said;
Whilst men in terror swayed to and fro,
And children questioned with awful dread,
That day two hundred years ago.

And hardest of all, the Bishop rose
And preached once more in the holy place;
His head had whitened with honored snows,
His life was full of gifts and grace.

But he said, "O, people perverse, yet mine,
Heed ere your hearts are for aye unfit!
Our sovereigns rule by the right divine;
King James is king! Ye must submit!"

And near and yet nearer the army came,
Blazing its way with fire and sword,
Till the hearts of the people were all aflame,
Echoing still with the Bishop's word:

"Better to go like a chastened flock
To the slaughter in God's appointed way,
Than the Lord's anointed thus to mock —
King James is king! Ye must obey!"

"Never!" a clear young voice rang out;
"The right divine is the people's own!"
And a dozen lads took up the shout —
"The Prince of Orange for England's throne!"

That very moment the summons came
At the city's gate with a sudden shock;
"Surrender!" they cry, "in the royal name!"
As loud at the ferry the soldiers knock

Then started the lads — the brave thirteen!
They wrest the keys from their secret place;
Of murderous weapons they catch the sheen
As they shut the gate in the foemen's face.

Then a dash to the walls! "This way! this way!
Bring the heaviest gun! Deal out the shot!"
In vain did the Bishop expound and pray;
They heard, but heeded the sermon not.

Their young hearts fired the dormant town ;
  Wider and higher the war-cry flew ;
The stores were opened, the gates fast down,
  And, panic-stricken, the foe withdrew.

In haste retreating across the Foyle,
  They changed their minds — so the annals tell ;
There was fire to face, ere the hand could spoil ;
  And fear on the grim besiegers fell.

Still from the city, "Defiance!" Then
  If ever were blithesome lads and merry,
'Twas they who shouted when King James' men
  Marched up and away from Londonderry!

THE KITCHEN MASQUERADE.

[BRIDGET'S STORY RETOLD BY ROB.]

IT was just before Lent; and Auntie and all
The young folks had gone to the Carnival ball;
And Auntie was Mary, Queen o' the Scots —
Wore a train of blue velvet and lots and lots
Of pearls and diamonds set in her hair,
On the bows of her slippers and everywhere;
And tall cousin Richard took sweet sister Belle;
She was "fair Lady Stella," he "Astrophel,"
As Sir Philip Sidney was called sometimes
From a book he had written all filled with rhymes —
Belle told me about it, and hoped I would be
Some day as good and as great as he;
But whether she meant our big cousin Rich
Or brave Sir Philip — I'm not sure which.

Well! papa and mamma stepped out in the hall
To meet some people coming to call,

And Bridget she hustled me off up-stairs,
And bade me undress and remember my prayers,

EVERYTHING IN THE KITCHEN STIRRED.

Then hurried out quick and shut tight the door
For fear that the company'd hear me roar.
I had to cry some — just a minute or so —
To soften her dear old heart, you know.

Pretty soon she came back — I knew that she would —
And said if I'd be very quiet and good,
She would tell me what happened one night when she
Went down-stairs after some ginger tea.
It was when she lived with Mrs. Van Hall,
And the folks had all gone to a fancy-dress ball,
Decked out in velvet and powder and laces,
With white silk masks to cover their faces,
Like Auntie and Rich and my own sister Belle;
But whoever they were, 'twasn't she that could tell.
However, they went; and at quarter past ten
Bridget crept off to bed and to sleep; and then
When the clock struck twelve, she woke with a sneeze,
And lay in a shiver expecting to freeze,
Till all at once she happened to think
She'd better have something hot to drink.
And so, as I told you, she started down-stairs —
Our kitchen is built in the ell, but theirs
Was made in the basement down two flights,
And the house was empty, and all the lights
In the hall were out, and — what do you think?
As she opened the door the least little chink,
It seemed as though somebody gave the word,
And everything in that kitchen stirred!

Poor Bridget stood as though glued to the floor,
When out stepped a queer little fellow who wore
A mask of pie-crust with slits for the eyes,
And a smile of the most enormous size,

A QUEER LITTLE FELLOW.

And he whispered, "I'm only the rolling-pin!
Dear Missis Bridget, do walk right in!"

"Yer who?" says Bridget. "Oho! indade?
Yer having a bit of a masquerade!"

With that, the circle whirled round the room,
And the tall floor manager, Mr. Broom,
Delighted to form such a beautiful ring,
Stood fanning himself with a turkey-wing,
While his aged grandmother clung to his side,
Her head in a calico duster tied.
Then the wet floor-mop with its draggled train
Switched by Bridget and off again;
The coffee-pot marched in a stately way,
Arm in arm, with the dinner-tray,
While Mr. Tongs, with his shiny face,
And his black legs wrapped in a pillow-case,
Escorted the shovel, charmingly drest
In Bridget's own night-cap — her very best!

In stalked the clothes-horse, and there astride
The silver forks rode side by side
With the kitchen folks; and on each rail,
Hung and clattered in pan and pail,
Spoons, ladles, and knives, and everything,
That wasn't able to stride or cling.

The tea-kettle whistled a "Pinafore" tune;
Quadrilles were drummed with pan and spoon;
The stove-poker, dressed in a funny rig,
On the new clothes-wringer turned a jig;
And the merriest music that ever was played
Rang out at the kitchen masquerade.

How they bobbed and perked and pranced!
How they smiled and smirked and danced!
Platters and pans and saucers whirled;
Covers and pie-plates rolled and twirled;
The mortar and pestle joined the din;
The pie-fork waltzed with the rolling-pin;
The spider rode on the coal-hod's back;
The pump grew frolicsome; but alack!
From the end of the sink he couldn't stir,
And so in the midst of the noise and whir,
He waved his one arm up and down,
The angriest pump in all the town.

She would have told me a good deal more,
But just at that moment the chamber door
Gave a little creak as it swung ajar,
And there on the threshold stood mamma:

And Bridget, sitting beside the bed,
Just threw her apron over her head,
And gasped, "Sure, mum, 'twas a smutty place
I found, meself, on the pillow-case!"
But mamma perplexed stood looking down
With something between a smile and a frown,
And we never knew what she thought of the tale,
For she only said, "O, Bridget McPhaile!"

A MINSTREL'S SONG.

TO the Danish camp a minstrel came,
A boyish singer with forehead fair;
He sang of love and of martial fame,
And touched his harp with a blithesome air.
And the savage Guthrun said, "Forsooth!
Love-songs are many, but brave hearts few;
Let him sing, if he list, this simple youth!
Nor harm nor good will his harping do."

A strange light gleamed in the minstrel's eyes,
He looked and listened the while he sang;
Then stole away in his harper's guise —
When, sudden, the Saxon war-cry rang,
And Danish Guthrun cried in ruth,
"Brave hearts are many, but who may sing,"
For his hosts were slain — and the minstrel youth
Was England's greatest and wisest king.

WILD COLUMBINE.

THE wayside fields are all a-flower ;
Come out, come out, O children mine !
Where summer hangs her rarest dower,
On tilting stalks of columbine.

O buttercup, thy glories wane ;
Bend low that jaunty head of thine ;
Too pale thy crest, too long thy reign ;
This day we crown the columbine.

O regal daisy, now, I ween,
Thy heart of gold hath ceased to shine ;
The queen is dead — long live the queen !
The golden-hearted columbine !

O meadow-lily, dusk and brown,
Whose cup once glowed like ruby wine,
Lay thou thy broken sceptre down
Before the scarlet columbine.

O harebells, hush your dainty notes,
As faint ye stand in far-off line,
Whilst martial-music gaily floats
From trooping bands of columbine.

Hark! how the elf-horn echoes ring! —
Come out, come out, O children mine,
And with the green-folk dance and sing,
Where grows the glad wild columbine.

SHEPHERD AND KING.

ON grassy uplands the village stands,
Beautiful Bethlehem of the hills!
And green below are the valley-lands,
And rainbow-hued the crystal rills
That trickle adown the mountain side,
And, hither and yon, come bubbling up
In coverts cool where the lambkins hide,
And a shepherd laddie fills his cup.

Sometimes in silence the sheep-boy sits
And gazes off to the dark Dead Sea;
While a legend old, through his fancy flits,
Of direful doom and mystery.
But oftener yet he turns his eyes
To the north, where stand the mountains glad;
And quick in his heart strange longings rise,
Wild hopes and vain, for a shepherd lad.

For he is the least of his father's sons ;
  Seven for warriors brave were born,
While he, the eighth, but a stripling, runs
  To tend the flocks from morn to morn.
For him are pastoral carols sweet,
  On the heights above or the lowlands damp ;
For them is the soldier's war-cry meet,
  The din and splendor of town and camp.

What were his gifts that he should moan
  To walk where the chiefs of old have trod !
The God of his fathers chose His own —
  Happy was he, if loved of God.
So never a touch of envy gave
  A jarring note to the sacred song ;
And the boy who guarded the sheep grew brave ;
  And the hand that touched the harp grew strong.

And thus when the day of feasting came,
  With ancient symbol of holy things,
And a Prophet mighty in deed and name
  Was his father's guest from the court of kings,
He humbly turned to his daily task
  On the slopes where the scarlet wild flowers wave ;
For what was the lad that he should ask
  To stand with his brothers proud and brave !

But lo! with speed from the village gates,
A messenger runs, and running cries: —
The shepherd boy on the hillside waits
With wonder writ in his longing eyes.
"Thou'rt called!" is the word; "come down to the feast!"
But the shepherd stands as though smitten dumb;
"The Prophet hath said it — 'Nor sire, nor priest,
Nor elder shall sit till the youth is come!'

"In vain have thy brethren, staunch and tall,
Passed by; he naught of their beauty sees;
'Come down!' saith the Prophet, 'though least of all;
For surely the Lord hath not chosen these.'"
So "ruddy of face" — the story says —
"Of beautiful countenance, good too see,"
The lad was led through the chosen ways,
To answer the prophecy — "This is he."

And the feast went on while the fair-haired boy
Sat at the feet of the Prophet gray; —
Ah! who can tell of the fear and joy
That burned in his heart that wondrous day,
When the prophet rose, at the word divine,
And over the boyish forehead poured
Sweet oil of olives with mystic sign,
To seal the anointed of the Lord.

"SAT AT THE FEET OF THE PROPHET GRAY."

"Thou art," cried the Voice, "great Israel's king;
King from the River unto the Sea;
King that unto His own shall bring
Never defeat, but victory!
And after victory, glorious peace;
While hymns of triumph thy courts shall fill;
And the ends of the earth shall never cease
To sing with thee of the Holy Hill."

So the ships of Tyre came sailing down,
Bringing him cedar and purple dyes;
And he builded a city the heights to crown,
That up from the valley of Kedron rise.
From shores of Ophir came silver and gold,
From lands of the Orient, many a gem,
And the sheep-boy dwelt, as he dreamed of old,
On the hills to the north of Bethlehem.

O sweet-voiced singer! O warrior king!
Low are thy palaces laid for aye;
But marvel of marvels! the lands still ring
With chorus and anthem of thine to-day,
And stranger and sweeter than all the rest,
In the wonderful olden tale, I ween,
Is that we should cherish and love the best
The shepherd's song of the "pastures green."

"THE LIGHT OF MORNING WAS IN HER HAIR."

AN EASTER LILY.

AT dawn she came, saint-like and fair,
In snowy gown with 'broidered band;
The light of morning in her hair,
An Easter lily in her hand.

And "Christ is risen"! she simply said;
O, blessed words of childish faith!
How could we think that Christ was dead,
Or question what the angel saith?

This day the Christ hath risen anew
Within our hearts because of thee,
Oh! angel-child, with eyes of blue,
That ask not where their Lord may be;

But follow, fearless and afar,
Whither the living Christ hath gone:
And they His whitest lilies are
Who lisp His name at Easter dawn.

THE MISSION TEA-PARTY.*

THE war in the East had ended;
Its terrors were past, they said;
There was peace, once more, for the living,
And peace for the valiant dead.

Through the splendid squares of Lucknow
The Highlanders marched again;
The heroes of fortress and jungle,
Brave Havelock's peerless men!

They had freed the beleaguered city,
Fought step by step through the vale;
And swept from the shore of the Ganges
Forever the Sepoy's trail.

*This incident was related to the author by Dr. William Butler, American Missionary in India during the Sepoy Rebellion.

The event occurred when Havelock's Brigade had returned to Lucknow, to take up their line of march for the Afghan frontier.

BRAVE HAVELOCK'S PEERLESS MEN.

Ay! open your gates, O Lucknow! —
  But measure, ye guards, your breath,
As ye think of those days, an hundred,
  When Havelock marched with death.

Then welcome them back with rejoicing,
  O minaret, tower and shrine!
For these are the men who saved you,
  Whose glory outlasteth thine!

Through the streets swept the colors of England,
  Borne proudly aloft on the air;
While the "throne land of Rama" re-echoed
  The Christian's thanksgiving and prayer.

And blithest of all were the pipers,
  Their tartan plaids streaming in pride,
As they woke, on the banks of the Goomtee,
  The airs of the Doon and Clyde.

Then the heart of one beautiful woman
  Was stirred by an impulse sweet,
As she thought of the long, forced marches,
  The weary and blood-stained feet;

Of the pain, the hunger, the thirsting,
The death in the jungle's gloom;
The rescue of women and children,
Threatened with direful doom.

BLITHEST OF ALL WERE THE PIPERS.

And she said, "I will spread them a banquet,
With a touch of the homeland cheer,
And the welcome their mothers would give them,
Afar in the heatherlands dear.

THE SOLDIERS OF HAVELOCK ARE SERVED WITH GRACE AND BOUNTY.

"Not for twice twelve months have they tasted
A simple cupful of tea!
I will serve it to-day for the heroes
Who periled their lives for me!

"Bid them come to the courts of the Mission!"
Gay awnings were hastily hung;
While on tripods of curious fashion,
The teakettles merrily swung;

Swung and sung songs of the homeland;
Familiar and sweet were the tunes,
As if winds of the loch and the mountain
Blew soft through the Indian noons.

She fastened the tartan of Scotland
With the thistle-bloom over her breast;
And her own little winsome daughter
In the bonny bright plaid she drest.

At the old gray gate of the Mission,
'Neath turret and watchtowers high,

Where the dusk-eyed Indian Princess
Had dreamed in the days gone by,

This fair-faced, brave-hearted woman,
A stranger from lands of the West,
To the ancient palace and gardens
Welcomed each war-worn guest.

And with Highland bonnets uplifted,
There under the Hindoo palm,
The soldiers of Havelock listened
To the Hebrew's glorious psalm:

"Thou wentest before thy people,
And kings of armies did flee!"
Then merrily under the shadows
They drank of the fragrant tea,

Served with the grace and the bounty
Of royal fête and of feast,
To the tattered and smoke-grimed heroes,
In the halls of the storied East.

And many a battle-scarred soldier
  Let fall from a glistening eye
Hot tears on the hand of his hostess
  For whom he had thought to die.

And for her was the Highlander's blessing
  Breathed low in that tenderer scene
When the pipers, proud in their places,
  Played grandly — "God save the Queen!"

ROMEO AND JULIET.

I FOUND the "Shakespeare" open where
The lovers of Verona met
And lingered, at the hanging stair,
In gardens of the Capulet.

And through the doorway, where between
The latticed walls the woodbines sway,
I saw once more the witching scene
From out the master's olden play.

To reach the vine-clad portico,
Secure the garden ladder led;
And on its rounds stood Romeo,
A "Tam o' Shanter" on his head.

"It is my love!" I heard him say,
And saw his dagger's flashing hilt
(A silver fruit-knife stowed away
Within his skirts of scarlet kilt).

"I SAW ONCE MORE THE WITCHING SCENE."

"Speak, Juliet! Oh, dear!" (aside) —
As tangled vines swung round his feet —
"You'll break your bones!" the maid replied;
Then laughed, "How can you be so sweet?"

And these two lovers, fond and true?
Ah, me! e'en now I smile to tell;
One was our Bess, with eyes of blue,
And one our neighbor's romping Nell.

CHOOSING HIS GIFTS.

BRAVE Rob Roy in the evening's light,
Lay still and gazed across the sky
Where flashing 'mid the hosts of night,
Orion and his train swept by.

"Give me no toys this Christmas Eve!"
He sternly said, the while he thought
Of deeds that valorous knights achieve,
Of victories most nobly wrought.

"I want Orion's sword and spurs,
His belt and that one glorious star,
That from his shoulder never stirs
As on he marches firm and far!"

And lo! across the southern sky,
With godlike stride Orion came;
The fire of ages in his eye,
His starry girdle all aflame.

"O youthful hero, rise!" he said;
"My sword and shield I offer you;
I've heard on high your martial tread,
And watched your followers small and few.

"Behold, beneath this blazing arch
How many a warrior great appears!
They all are yours — but you must march
With them ten thousand million years;

"And nightly guide the endless line,
With sleepless eye and sword of fire;
For they who win the stars must shine!
Who walk the heavens, must never tire!"

Our hero gasped, "Oh! give me, please,
Something for boys — a stocking full!"
And woke to see the Pleiades
Sink westward with the Golden Bull;

And great Orion overhead,
Move on with stately step and slow;
While on the hearth there shone instead
The ever blessed Christmas glow.

A STUDY FROM LIFE.

THE brown owl woke at the break of day,
And opened his eyes in grave surprise;
Was it night or morning — who could say?
Or whether the sun or moon should rise —
For a dense gray fog enwrapt the land,
Above and below, to left and right;
No tree nor shrub on either hand,
Not one familiar thing in sight;
And the brown owl laughed in his selfish glee,
"There's nobody left in the world but me!"

Alone he sat on a jagged stump,
One more to his taste he could not find;
It was green with moss while a swaying clump
Of graceful cat-tails waved behind.
"Now, Madame Weasel, you'll not intrude
While I'm at work in the chicken-yard,"
He said to himself; "and I'll take my food
Quite undisturbed by Sir Reynard.
'Twas hard to be suddenly pounced upon; —
But what if the chickens now are gone!"

Should such be the case, a mouse will do ;
It is not wise to be over nice,
When all one's neighbors have vanished too —
But I forgot ! there are no mice !
Well, never mind ! I can always sleep ;
I'll take for my own the black bear's den,
In the trunk of the oak so dark and deep ;
I've always wanted that place — and then
Won't the bats and the squirrels envious be ? —
But where are they — and the hollow tree !

Then a feeling strange crept over the owl,
As he crouched on his stump so lone and still ;
He'd have given the world for one faint howl,
From out the fog-bank gray and chill.
"'Tis really a dreadful thing," he said,
"To lose forever both foe and friend ;
'Twere better to share one's daily bread,
Than live alone till life shall end ;
And what avails the very best tree,
If there's nobody left on earth but me ! "

Down his mottled breast one slow tear crept ; —
But the sun just then through the gray mist broke,
And a thrill of life through the forest swept,
And the birds in a thousand nests awoke.

The sly fox laughed as he trotted by
  In search of a meal; while far in the east,
The curtain of fog rolled up to the sky;
  But the owl still musing on fast and feast,
Away to the depths of the forest flew,
To ponder the lessons of life anew.

THE ITALIAN SHEPHERD BOY.

BEYOND the mountains the sands are gold —
Silver and gold — the old men say,
As they tell the story the strangers told,
Who passed o'er the hills one far-off day.

And the clear sea gleams with its wealth of pearls,
And the shallow shoals are emerald green ;
And down and around the sea-gull whirls
And dips for a star in the water's sheen.

And the sails from a thousand isles are furled
At the feet of the city vast and high ;
And a yellow dome like a golden world,
Stands out in a green and purple sky.

Ah! who can doubt that the tale is true ?
Not the mountain lad with his dreamy eyes,
As he gazes up to the hill-tops blue,
And on where the charmèd valley lies.

Oh! the palace walls are high and grand!
So the strangers said; but they could not wait
To point the way to that wondrous land
Where white gods stand at the marble gate.

But up and away, my mountain lad!
The path lies straight for thy youthful feet;
And the world hath ever a welcome glad,
When hearts are loving and young and sweet.

"Hoiho! hoiho!" — What is't that rings
O'er the steep cliffs far from the valley lights?
"Hoiho! hoiho!" — Who is't that springs
From his dreams on the gray Abruzzo heights?

'Tis the shepherd's horn, now soft, now clear,
As the herdsmen gather from far and wide;
And the listening dryads laugh to hear
Their footstep ring on the mountain side.

And he whose eyes with a longing glance,
Flashed back wild hopes to the sunset light,
Swings a scarlet scarf through the tinkling dance,
To the witching airs of a summer's night.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS IN AMERICA.

'TWAS not when the haughty Spaniards came,
With blazoned banner and martial din,
Planting the cross in the dear Christ's name,
But leaving a trail of shame and sin;
'Twas not when the Pilgrim Fathers sung
Their solemn hymns on the sombre shore —
Ah! never a Christmas bell they rung,
Never a holly wreath they wore.

It was many and many a year ere then,
When the seas were plowed by the Vikings brave,
When the Norse chief sailed with his fearless men,
North and south o'er the raging wave.
When down from the realm of ice and snow,
Thorfin the sturdy set his sail; —
But the world had forgotten it long ago,
Had not the Sagas told the tale.

. . . . . .

"'Tis a marvelous story," Gudrida said,
As she sat in state in her husband's hall,
And laid her hand on the golden head
Of a beautiful lad, blue-eyed and tall.
"'Tis a marvelous tale — but I see it yet,
That dim far coast where our baby lay,
And we said, 'In our joy shall we forget
Our Saviour's birth on this holy day?'"

At her side the stalwart Thorfin stood,
And gazed as she spoke with a loving pride,
On the fair face under the jeweled hood
Of her who followed — brave-hearted bride —
When young and comely he came to woo,
The proudest of all the Norseland band,
And together they sailed the trackless blue,
In search of a wonderful, unknown land.

Once more in the shelter of Iceland's Isle,
Where song and story abide alway,
In the warmth of fortune's kindliest smile,
They dwell; and the chieftain answered, "Yea!
'Tis a marvelous story! Hist! how we sped
Through the gulf where the dizzying icebergs swim!
Till, one by one, like wraiths of the dead,
They sank in the far horizon's rim.

Then we skirted along gray barren shores,
And hill-slopes green to their very feet,
Nor slackened the sails, nor eased the oars,
Till the winds blew soft and warm and sweet.
Still south and west, till our dragon prow
Found rest in the arms of a sheltered vale ;
I fancy I feel the soft breeze now!
Thou'rt right, sweet wife, a wondrous tale!"

"Nay! God be thanked for his gracious ways
Now and forever," Gudrida cried ;
"But for aye, in my heart, the day of days
Is that which we kept at the white Yule-tide.
The seasons had come and the seasons sped,
With the spring-time green and the autumn flame,
And ever the luscious fruits grew red,
And the deer from the endless forests came.

"And the days were a dream in that sunnier clime,
Where short nights herald the early morn ;
Till there in the calm of the Christmas time,
In that nameless country our child was born.
And we said, 'In our joy shall we e'er forget
The Christ and His love on His own birth-night?
Ho! bring the holly with hoar-frost wet,
And set the torches of pine alight!'

"And thou didst place on the infant's breast
The cross thy fathers from Norway bore;
And kindled the tapers the priest had blest,
Last and most precious of all our store.
That night in my dreams the Maid divine,
Most holy of mothers, appeared to me,
Saying, 'Gudrida, for thee and thine
Are thy father's halls on the Northern Sea.

"'Not yet is this land thy people's home,
But as thou hast honored this day my Son,
Thou shalt tell from the North to the gates of Rome,
Of the shores that wait for the Holy One'!" —
"And thou shalt, by my sword, sweet wife and fair!
Thou shalt journey to Rome," the Northman said;
But 'twas Snorri, the lad, who led her there,
When Thorfin the sturdy lay cold and dead.

. . . . . .

Oh! 'twas hundreds and hundreds of years ago,
That the sweet Norsewoman of Christmas sung;
While to-day, in their arches, to and fro,
From east to west are the Christ-bells rung.
And *ours* is the land of which she told
To Pope and Prince in her journey long; —
But the world had forgotten the story old,
Had not the Sagas kept the song

OUT OF FASHION.

AGAINST the cottage window pane,
The maple branches hung;
And in the sunshine's brilliant glow
The leaves of autumn swung.

And one was young and gay and bright,
In gold and scarlet drest;
And one was old, with garments sere
Close-folded o'er her breast.

"Oh! tell me, granddame," cried the child,
"If those old times were true,
When city folk for love of us,
Searched all the country through —

"And bore us home to grace their walls,
And deemed us fair to see;
Do you not think, O grandma dear,
They'll come this year for me?"

"Alas! my child," the dame replied,
Sad in her garments brown;
"The times have changed! You'll never pass
A winter in the town.

"Just think how autumn leaves would look,
In these days, on the shelf,
With Dresden ware and Haviland,
Faience and flowered delf!

"You'd burn with shame and long to hide
In russet gown with me: —
Look, child, within the window there,
And tell me what you see!"

"I see — why! Bess and Christabel!
And Bess is moulding clay,
And making something like a vase
She saw, in town, one day.

"And Christabel enraptured kneels
Upon a wondrous rug,
The while she paints some strange red flower
Upon an earthen jug.

"They talk of *art* and *bric-à-brac!*
They fling me from their sight;
The times, indeed, have changed! and we
Are out of fashion quite!"

"'Twas ever thus!" the granddame sighed,
"I know the world's odd ways;
May I not live, I pray, to see
The next new fashion-craze!"

THE CRICKET'S STORY.

THE high and mighty lord of Glendare,
The owner of acres both broad and fair,
Searched, once on a time, his vast domains,
His deep, green forest and yellow plains,
For some rare singer, to make complete
The studied charms of his country-seat ;
But found, for all his pains and labors,
No sweeter songstèr than had his neighbors.

Ah, what shall my lord of the manor do?
He pondered the day and the whole night through.
He called on the gentry of hill-top and dale ;
And at last on Madame the Nightingale, —
Inviting, in his majestical way,
Her pupils to sing at his grand soirée,
That perchance among them my lord might find
Some singer to whom his heart inclined.
What wonder, then, when the evening came,
And the castle gardens were all aflame

With the many curious lights that hung
O'er the ivied porches, and flared among
The grand old trees and the banners proud,
That many a heart beat high and loud,
While the famous choir of Glendare Bog,
Established and led by the Brothers Frog,
Sat thrumming as hoarsely as they were able,
In front of the manager's mushroom table!

The overture closed with a crash — then, hark!
Across the stage comes the sweet-voiced Lark.
She daintily sways, with an airy grace,
And flutters a bit of gossamer lace,
While the leafy alcove echoes and thrills
With her liquid runs and lingering trills.
Miss Goldfinch came next, in her satin gown,
And shaking her feathery flounces down,
With much expression and feeling sung
Some "Oh's" and "Ah's" in a foreign tongue;
While to give the affair a classic tone,
Miss Katydid rendered a song of her own,
In which each line closed, as it had begun,
With some wonderful deed which she had done.
Then the Misses Sparrow, so prim and set,
Twittered and chirped through a long duet;

And poor little Wren, who tried with a will,
But who couldn't tell "Heber" from "Ortonville,"
Unconscious of sarcasm piped away,
And courtesied low o'er a huge bouquet
Of crimson clover-heads, culled by the dozen,
By some brown-coated, plebeian cousin.

But you should have heard the red Robin sing
His English ballad, "Come, beautiful Spring!"
And Master Owlet's melodious tune,
"O, meet me under the silvery moon!"
Then, as flighty Miss Humming-bird didn't care
To sing for the high and mighty Glendare,
The close of the evening's performance fell
To the fair young Nightingale, Mademoiselle.
Ah! the wealth of each wonderful note
That came from the depths of her tiny throat!
She carolled, she trilled, and she held her breath,
Till she seemed to hang at the point of death;
She ran the chromatics through every key,
And ended triumphant on upper C;
Airing the graces her mother had taught her,
In a manner quite worthy of Madame's daughter.

But his lordship glared down the leafy aisle
With never so much as a nod or smile,

Till, out in the shade of a blackberry thicket,
He all of a sudden spied little Miss Cricket ;
And, roused from his gloom, like an angry bat,
He sternly demanded, " Who is that ? "
" Miss Cricket, my lord, may it please you so,
A charity scholar — ahem ! — you know —

MISS CRICKET MODESTLY SANG.

Quite worthy, of course, but we couldn't bring " —
Thundered His Mightiness, " Let her sing ! "
The Nightingale opened her little eyes
Extremely wide in her blank surprise ;
But catching a glimpse of his lordship's rage,
Led little Miss Cricket upon the stage,

Where she modestly sang, in her simple measures,
Of "Home, sweet Home," and its humble pleasures.
And the lord of Glendare cried out in his glee,
"This little Miss Cricket shall sing for me!"

Of course, of comment there was no need;
But the world said, "Really!" and, "Ah, indeed!"
Yet, notwithstanding, we find it true,
As his lordship does will the neighbors do;
So this is the way, as the legends tell,
In the very beginning it befell
That the Crickets came, in the evening's gloam,
To sing at our hearths of "Home, sweet Home."

THE DUMB PRINCE.

AGED Wærmund soon will die;
Woe to us!" the people said;
With his fathers he must lie;
Who shall reign when he is dead?
Not his son, for he is dumb;
Maledictions on his head!

King Wærmund, they loved him well,
Those old Angles fierce and bold,
Till this horror o'er them fell —
"Aged Wærmund's days are told!
And shall dumb prince ever come
His proud name and realm to hold?"

For alas! the tale was true
Which throughout the land was heard;
Tall the youth, with eyes of blue,
Brave, but ne'er a single word
Had the young prince uttered since
Breath his baby lips had stirred.

Up rose Rigan then, his heart
Filled with craft and cunning things;
"Give to me," he cried, "the part
Forfeited by speechless kings!
By my head, I'll reign instead
Of this young hawk stripped of wings!"

Treacherous Rigan swung his cup
High above his oaken board;
Each retainer started up
With his hand upon his sword.
"Rigan fair shall be the heir!"
Rose the cry of churl and lord.

In his palace Wærmund sat
Knowing life was on the wane;
But his heart was staunch as that
Of his stoutest earl or thane.
"Die must I? I will *not* die
Till ye swear my son shall reign!"

Close his courtiers gathered round,
Sorely troubled every one;
To their king in fealty bound,
Should they set aside his son?
"Yet," cried they, in wild dismay,
"What hath dumb prince ever done?"

"Can he lead us forth to smite
Rigan's host that draweth nigh?
Give the summons for the fight?
Shout the ancient battle-cry?
Or retain the power to reign,
Though the hosts of Rigan fly?"

Brave of heart, but mute of tongue,
Stood the prince with flashing eye;
All his soul with torture wrung,
As the tumult waxèd high;
For he heard each bitter word,
Though he could not make reply.

"Am I to be held unfit,"
Thought he, "for my father's throne?
Shall this Rigan's children sit
In the halls that are my own?
Who is he that he should be
Crowned with what is mine alone?"

Midst the clamor and the din,
Speechless still, as stone, stood he;
Till the pent-up strife within,
Burst in utter agony.
One wild cry arose on high,
And the prince's tongue was free!

Warriors, thrilled with wonder, bowed ;
Strong men pallid grew and weak ;
Speechless now the awe-struck crowd,
For they heard the dumb man speak ;
And the tears unshed for years
Trickled down the old King's cheek.

"God has wrought a wonder here,"
Said the courtiers, under breath ;
"We will follow without fear
Brave Prince Offa unto death!"
And in haste they girt his waist
As for him who conquereth.

With this sign of knighthood sealed —
Honor no man need despise —
Thus the true Prince stood revealed,
Clarion-tongued, before their eyes.
"Follow me," he cried, "and see
How the traitor Rigan dies!"

But false Rigan waited not,
When he heard the war-cry sound ;
Riverward, headlong and hot,
Plunged his steed ; and both were drowned.
There, they say, the waves to-day
Swirl with mocking laugh around.

Many years Prince Offa reigned
O'er his Anglian earls and lords
In the right of Kingship gained
With this sudden gift of words;
Thus the page of that dim age,
Quaintly writ, the tale records.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE PACIFIC.

OF all the grand old figures
  Engraven in form sublime,
Upon history's pictured pages,
  And hallowed by touch of time,
That of a mail-clad Spaniard
  From childhood hath haunted me; —
He stands on a mountain summit;
  He crieth, "The sea! the sea!"

Alone with heaven and the grandeur
  That below and beyond him rolled;
The blue of the great Pacific,
  The shining shores of gold;
The sea unknown, and the countries
  No Christian foot hath trod;
He, first to behold their splendor,
  He, first to give thanks to God!

Oh! men may climb to the mountains,
But never a day like this;
And ships may sail to the westward,
Or north, or south, nor kiss
The waves of so mighty an ocean
Wherever their flags be furled;
No, never in after ages!
Never in all the world!

Brave Nuñez de Balboa!
What wonder thy pulses thrill,
Or the myriad hearts of the nation
Should echo their throbbing still!
Majestic and lone thou standest
With the vision vouchsafed to thee;
In the joy and the rapture forever
Exclaiming — "The sea! the sea!"

SONG OF THE HAMMOCK.

MERRILY, cheerily, all the day swinging,
I am the hammock gay, this is my song: —
Ho! for the life that the springtime is bringing!
Hey! for the joys that to childhood belong!

Sweet in the spring are the apple-trees bloomy!
Up to their white laden branches I go,
Bearing the children in arms that are roomy,
Bringing back showers of blossoming snow.

Touch us but lightly now! Tired with pleasure,
Nestle the golden heads close to my breast;
Hither and yon; with a low droning measure,
While on my bosom the little ones rest.

Lazily, drowsily, dreamily swaying,
Now do the summer airs beckon to me;
"Follow oh, follow!" they seem to be saying,
"We wait by the mountains, the lakes and the sea."

Hang me awhile in green shady places,
Sheltered by lattice and lit by the rose ;
Broad, cool verandas and vine-covered spaces
Call with a promise of quiet repose.

Here come the youthful folk, summer-tryst keeping,
Friends of a morning passing too soon ;
Here is the gray-bearded grandsire sleeping
Through the slow-pulsating hours of noon.

And here in the shadow, some sweet little maiden
Dreameth the long witching twilight away ;
Perchance, of the lover still roaming in Aiden,
The Prince who shall come in a year and a day.

Ah, then ! weave me stoutly of cordage unbroken,
Or in the bright meshes of gay silken thread,
Or yet if it please thee — and soft be it spoken —
Of clothes-line and barrel-staves found in the shed !

It matters not what, since my slumberous motion
Holds the land in a spell from the east to the west.
I swing by the valley, the hillside, the ocean,
Rocked by the magical Spirit of Rest.

So when the troops of winter come clanging,
When the chill rains fall and gloomy winds blow,
Leave me not sadly, by tattered ropes hanging,
Lone and forlorn to drift in the snow.

But where the firelight shineth, revealing
Childlife and homelife and comforts untold,
Swing me, I pray thee, with rings from the ceiling,
Deck me with ribbons of garnet and gold.

Thus shall the visions of summer time stir thee,
Murmur of forest and glimmer of streams,
While on my cushions of balm from the fir-tree,
Soft be thy slumbers and happy thy dreams!

A CHRISTMAS WAIF.

THE earth was white with its Christmas snows;
Above, the stars hung lone and clear:
From the castle-hearth the blue smoke rose,
With little of Christmas cheer.

For the lord of the land long months ago,
Had pledged his faith to the Knightly Cause;
And sadly had passed the days, and slow,
Since he rode to the Holy Wars.

My lady knelt in her chamber white,
And bowed her head on the Book and prayed;
While tearful-eyed, in the dim fire-light,
Close-nestled a little maid.

"Ho! and Oho!" — A ringing call
Which wakes the warden within the gate;
Child Elsie runs to the windows tall: —
"'Tis the Christmas waifs who wait!"

A sound of steps on the oaken floor,
The torches' flare — and bearded gray,
The henchman swung the carven door —
"Sweet lady, of thee I pray

A boon, for the minstrel poor who sings
For gift of alms from place to place;
But who craves to-night for the song he brings,
The sight of my lady's face."

"A worthless boon! For the dear Christ's sake
To him give place where the Yule-log burns;
But on hearth of my own no song shall wake
Till the lord of the land returns!"

The old man bowed: "Ha! back, you slave!"
For close at his side the minstrel stands;
The face of the lady wan and grave
Is hidden within her hands.

But sweet Child Elsie, with lingering eyes
Still bright through tears of sorrow and loss,
'Neath the tattered cloak of the stranger spies
The gleam of the scarlet cross.

No minstrel he though gaunt and gray ;
The master ; and not the servant's guest ;
"And my own papa, on this blessed day !"
Cried the child upon his breast.

A wild shout burst through the castle's gloom :
But the mother sat like the speechless dead ;
Till, kneeling low, in the firelit room,
"My lady !" the wanderer said.

Oh ! the Christ-night stars are chill and lone ;
But the castle-lights stream far and near ;
While the Knight of the Red Cross clasps his own
In the warmth of the Christmas cheer.

A ROMANCE FROM THE CLASSICS.

SHE was a little old woman,
Her garments were straight and long;
He was a soldier of Chiron's school,
Handsome and young and strong.

They stood by the famed Anaurus,
Deep swollen the stream and wide;
"Oh! how shall I reach the farthermost bank?"
The little old woman cried.

"I'll shoulder your bones, good mother!"
(All spoken in purest Greek),
His locks were long and she clung to them
As he waded across the creek.

But alack! one loosened sandal
Stuck fast on the muddy shore;
Just imagine his wrath as he limped along,
With the comical load he bore!

"THEY STOOD BY THE FAMED ANAURUS."

When lo ! a transformation,
Right under the hero's eyes ;
And the woman all withered and old and lean
Stepped out of her thin disguise.

And Juno, white-armed and queenly,
The Thunderer's peerless wife,
To Jason, her thanks and a blessing gave
Which followed him all his life.

MORAL.

Be gentle in heart like Jason,
And willing and prompt to do,
For we never can tell when our turn may come —
For a goddess — to lose a shoe.

ROB ROY'S DREAM.

THE ox-eyed daisies waved in the grass,
The tall grass rippled with every breeze,
And stretched away where the shadows pass
To and fro 'neath the dark old trees,
Enwreathing in strange, fantastic lines,
The shapes of the sturdy oaks that grew
Here and there, with the lofty pines, —
Which were the older, no one knew.

And Rob Roy dreamily closed his book,
Still holding a finger the lids between,
As he lay in his cool, sequestered nook,
And gazed below to the deep ravine, —
Where the waves of the noisy Cascade Brook,
Flecked with many a shimmering speck,
Their dancing, gurgling pathway took
Down to the beautiful Kennebec.

The river the red men rightly name,
"A river, rolling and deep and blue;"
And Rob Roy thought "Is it still the same?
Can the tale this old book tells be true?
Did these aged trees in this very glen,
Witness the hunger, the thirst, the pain,
When Arnold marched with a thousand men
Through the tangled wilderness of Maine?

"Did the river laugh in the self-same way?
Was it just one hundred years ago?
Were the Indian boys all out that day,
And where was I — I should like to know!" —
And he ponders the story over again,
While shadows across his eyelids creep, —
"When Arnold marched with a thousand men" —
But the little lad was sound asleep.

And he dreamed, as he lay beneath the pine,
That down from the top of the tallest tree,
There fluttered, with many a mystic sign,
A crow as black as a crow could be;
But who seemed infirm and old and lean,
As he clung with his stiff, rheumatic claw,
To a shattered stump moss-grown and green,
And cleared his throat with a husky "Caw!"

Then a sudden flapping of wings was heard,
And around as far as the eye could reach,
The tremulous summer air was stirred
With dark forms, crying, "A speech! a speech!"
When slowly the aged bird arose,
And said as he wiped away a tear,
"It is but fitting, my fellow-crows,
That we on this sad, Centennial year —

"Lest the giddy youth for aye shall cease
To think with pride of the ancient days,
When our fathers held this land in peace,
And life went on in its good old ways, —
Should meet to talk of the happy past
Ere yet our homes were torn awreck,
Ere Arnold's band like a fateful blast,
Swept up the beautiful Kennebec.

"'Twas in seventeen hundred and seventy-five,
I well remember the day, the year;
But hardly a crow is now alive
Who watched with me from the pine-top here,
To see the troops as they straggled by,
('Twas here their balls just grazed my neck)
Caw! caw! I was then too young to die!
I saw them fall before Quebec.

"The brook still struggles to meet the sea,
But the sordid mill its current clogs;
And the rolling river of old so free,
Is choked by its countless drifting logs.
Where once the song-bird cheered our coasts,
We list to the iron monster's screech;
And an endless line of barren posts
Has taken the place of spruce and beech.

"Don't talk to me of the fruitful soil!
Don't talk to me of the waving corn!
It is little they leave for us to spoil,
In the very haunts where our sires were born.
We plead for our ancient rights in vain!
There is no place for our feet to rest!
The century's voice to us is plain;
It says: 'Go West! young crows, go West!'"

And Rob Roy starting up from his sleep,
At the dusky edge of the woodland saw
A flock of birds in the circle sweep,
But all he heard was their distant "Caw!"
Still to the lad it is very clear
That he could tell, if he only chose,
How the crows kept their Centennial year,
And perhaps he really could — who knows?

MOLLY ADAMS' LEGACY.

MOLLY ADAMS? — Well, let me see!
Your great-great-grandma, dear, was she.

In the bloom of youth, when life was new,
With her lover-husband staunch and true,

She came from the town on Boston Bay,
To dwell in the wilds of Maine, they say.

And the bit of lace that lightly stirs
To-day, in your mother's hand, was hers;

The bit of lace and the broidered shawl —
These the legacy — these are all!

All? but treasures there were, and rare,
Kept and cherished with tender care,

In the curious box with wood inlaid; —
And these were the songs for her children made.

I have often heard my grandma tell
Of the little group that, with mystic spell,

Enraptured sat at their mother's knee,
Bound by her sweet-voiced witchery.

I see them still while the night-winds moan
Without, in the forest vast and lone;

I watch the bounteous fire-light glare
Over the children's golden hair,

As the youthful mother, in ruff and cap,
Tells them of "Little Maid Prim's mishap;"

And sings with a sweet, unconscious calm,
Something besides the loved Bay Psalm.

From the precious box all the stories came,
'Neath the magical lid that bore her name —

"Molly Adams" — and story and song
To her children's children should all belong.

But when she had old and gray-haired grown,
Ere sons and daughters had claimed their own,

A dearer wealth than their lives had earned —
One terrible day was the homestead burned!

Sorry were they for the dwelling old;
But houses and lands are bought and sold!

Sorry enough for the thin old spoons,
Dented and battered with baby tunes;

For the tiny cups on the dresser kept;
And the bowl where the great blue dragon slept!

Sorry for hand-wrought mantle and hem;
But the tears we shed are not for them!

Sweet Molly Adams! we weep to-day,
For the precious box that in ashes lay.

For the beautiful songs we never shall know,
Writ in the days of the long ago;

For witching legend and story told
Ere the loving lips were forever cold.

But I sometimes think, O, boy of mine,
That the lost inheritance yet is thine;

That a drop of blood in your hand so brown,
From this fair ancestress old came down ;

And this is the reason you love to write
Your stories yourself, this wintry night ;

That you sing to the fire your rhymes and runes,
With their queer conceits and jingling tunes

That perchance, O lad of the light-brown locks,
Your songs all come from the olden box.

THE RETURN OF THE NORTHMEN

[*Fragment from the History of the Ancient Franks.*]

A. D. 280.

BEFORE them rolled the strange Black Sea ;
Beyond the broad sea-foam
The ocean's dread immensity ;
Beyond the ocean — home !

How came they here in this far clime,
These sons of liberty,
Who from the unremembered time,
Had boasted they were free ?

Upon the North Sea's stormy shore
Their wind-rocked cradles swung ;
Their veins the blood of Vikings bore,
Their songs the Sagas sung.

Untamed by Rome's triumphant hosts
They scorned each proud command
Till, severed from their native coasts,
A broken exiled band

Borne at the point of lance and spear,
Through leagues of solitude,
They lay before their captors here,
Vanquished, but unsubdued.

"Have sons of Northmen learned to yield?"
The chieftain waits reply;—
A runic legend on his shield,
Defiance in his eye.

"Awaken, then, if ye be men,
If ye be Franks and free;"
He sternly cries: "awake, as when
Men scoffed at tyranny!

"Have ye forgot that ye were braves
Beloved by Wodan — God?
Have ye forgot your fathers' graves
Beyond the Rhine-washed sod?

"Forgot the heerbann's ringing call,
When from the northern seas
Ye swept upon the towns of Gaul
And crossed the Pyrenees?

"Perchance ye love the Southland lights,
The warm and fruitful year,
Nor languish for the wooded heights,
The urock and the deer!

"Perchance the strong arm nerveless grows,
And heavy seems the lance!
Ye shiver when the north wind blows,
Ye smile when sunbeams dance!

"I am a chieftain and a Frank!
I scorn the sunlit skies!
I glory in my forests dank,
Where storm-swept mountains rise!

"Shall I who taught my infant sons
To pierce the wild beast's lair,
Sit down where limpid water runs,
And sun my yellow hair?

"AWAKEN THEN, IF YE BE MEN."

"Shall I, who with my daughter's hand
Gave liberty's fair dower,
Crouch like a slave, in this far land,
Beneath the despot's power?

"What, clamor ye for moor and fen?
Dare ye the tyrant's frown?
Awaken then, if ye be men,
The full moon looketh down —

"The month's full moon whose face shall be,
As in the ancient tale,
Our own triumphant augury!
Seize ye the ships — and sail!"

One wild assault! and thus they sailed;
Hearts that could not forget;
Hearts that beneath no terror quailed;
Hearts that were homeward set.

On through the fearful, unknown waves
Where grim, masked danger smiles;
On where the Inter-Ocean laves
Its countless sunny isles:

On past the dread Sicilian shores,
And through the gates of Spain : —
What matter now the blood-dipped oars
Which tracked that southern main !

What matter now the hot pursuit,
The ocean's yawning grave ?
Life's uncomplaining lips are mute !
The dead, their birthright save !

On, by unerring instinct led,
Swift, passionate and grand,
They northward still and northward sped ;
They gained the Fatherland !

Oh ! Love of Home ! who clings to thee
Drifts not astray nor far !
Be thou, for aye, upon Life's sea
The children's guiding star !

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